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world; and we point to the Catholic Creeds as containing a full and concise statement of that faith.

Now, we really do not see what room there is to mistake what we mean by the visible Church of Christ on earth.

What, then, is the difference between us and Roman Catholics?

We have always thought it to be this—that *they* consider the Church of Christ to consist only of that part which acknowledges the Roman Church to be the mother and mistress of all Churches, and the Pope to be the Vicar of Jesus Christ on earth: and, of course, that all other bishops, clergy, and people that do not acknowledge this, are no part of the Church of Christ on earth. We have always thought that this is the keystone of their notion of the Church; whereas *we* think that there are Churches on earth, parts of the visible Church of Christ, that do not thus acknowledge the Roman Church as mother and mistress, nor the Pope as Vicar of Christ: and yet, notwithstanding, are really parts of Christ's Church on earth.

We are truly happy to see that in this essential question "Philalethes" appears to agree with us.

We pointed to the Greek Churches, which do not acknowledge Rome as their mother and mistress, and which expressly deny that the Pope is the Vicar of Christ; we pointed to them in proof that "Philalethes" was wrong in taking the expression "Christian Church," as if it meant *only* the Roman Church. And to this "Philalethes" answers—"Sir, I am aware of the existence of these Churches." Very good: then these are parts of the Church of Christ on earth, though they do not acknowledge Rome as their mistress, nor the Pope as the Vicar of Christ.

We have now good grounds for hoping that as "Philalethes" and we come to understand each other better, we shall agree in sound notions of the Church of Christ. This is the effect we hope for from a fair and candid discussion.

"Philalethes" takes some pains to prove that this Greek Church holds Transubstantiation; but he produces no proof except *the opinions of individuals*. We have already called on him to say whether he considers this method of proof, sufficient to establish the doctrine of a Church; and he has not answered us.

For instance—if we produce as many and as great authorities in the Church of Rome, saying, "The image is to be worshipped *with the same honour and worship* with which we worship those whose image it is," will he admit this as proof that this is the doctrine of the Roman Church? We ask him to answer this—"Yes," or "No."

If he will not what right has he to offer us the same proof that the Greek Church holds Transubstantiation?

How do we know that the Roman Church holds Transubstantiation? We know it thus:—She has decreed it in the Council of Trent, and has put it into her creed. We ask the same proof that the Greek Church holds it. Let "Philalethes" show us in what council she had decreed it; in what creed she has inserted it.

With respect to the case of Berengarius, which has hitherto been the main subject of "Philalethes's" letters (but of which he says so little in this letter), we beg to say, that we do not at present clearly understand how far "Philalethes" agrees with us, or how far he differs from us, about the real merits of that question. We think no good can come of any discussion in which the parties do not take due pains, each to understand the real opinions of the other about the matter in discussion. We, therefore, beg "Philalethes" to tell us exactly what his opinion is.

The question stands thus:—"Philalethes" brought forward the fact, that Berengarius was condemned, and forced to retract his opinion in various councils. We selected the most important, that which has been put in the canon law, consisting of Pope Nicholas II. and 113 bishops, held at Rome, in the year 1059. We gave the words which Berengarius was compelled to sign—that the true body and blood of Christ is, "in *a sensible manner* (*sensualiter*), handled by the hands of the priest, broken and ground by the teeth of the faithful." We affirmed that the word, *sensualiter*, can mean nothing else than this, "in a way that our senses can judge of and perceive." Now, we want to understand what "Philalethes" thinks of this. Does he think that the Pope and Council were right? or does he think that they were wrong? He has not told us, and we call on him to tell us: we cannot discuss this matter with him without knowing what his opinion is. We, therefore, call on him to answer this.

Our opinion is, that he will never venture to say that the Pope and the Council were right.

And if they were wrong, and if—according to his notions—the Pope and the Council spoke the doctrines of the whole Church, where was then the visible Church of Christ, according to his notion?

But if the Pope and Council were wrong, what are we to think of those, who, on "Philalethes's" confession, placed Berengarius in a position in which he had nothing but "destruction before him and sorrow behind," merely because he did not continue stedfast in the profession of *false doctrine*?

But "Philalethes" asks, why did not poor Berengarius walk off out of the Council at Rome to Constantinople? He tells us to look at the map, and it is only a step. Well, on a small map it may be three inches; but on the ground it may be a thousand miles. It was not so easy to do this when Rome was in her glory. If this were so easy, what a fool John Huss must have been! Why did he not walk away quietly when they were going to burn him?

We have received other letters, not meant for publication, on this subject of "the visible Church." We intend, in our next number, to propose our views more fully concerning it.

ON PURGATORY.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE CATHOLIC LAYMAN.

SIR—I shall now proceed to obviate your objections, and to gratify you by showing that what you reject as "*mere assertion*" can be supported by irrefragable proofs; and that what you so explicitly deny is a matter of fact. I shall begin with St. Basil, Com. in Cap. ix. Isai. T. 1. p. 554:—"The words of Isaiah (Cap. ix. 19)—through the wrath of the Lord is the land burned"—declares "that things that are earthly shall be made the food of a punishing fire, to the end that the soul may receive favour and be benefitted. And the people shall be as fuel of the fire" *(ibid)*: This is not a threat of extermination, but it denotes expurgation according to the expression of the Apostle; "If any man's works burn he shall suffer loss; but himself shall be saved, yet so as by fire"—(1 Cor. iii. 15.) Truly, since our God is called a consuming fire, he will consume the wood and what vices arise from matter, which adhere to the soul in the flesh, not in the spirit. And when the fire shall have consumed the wood of sin, as it does grass, then that matter being destroyed which was fuel to the chastening fire, the Prophet says—"The burnt mountains shall repose," &c. (*ibid* Cap. x. p. 563-4). St. Gregory of Nyssa (Orat. pro defunct, Tom. 11, page 166, et seq.) "But when he (man) has quitted his body and the difference between virtne and vice is known, he cannot be admitted to approach the Divinity till the purging fire shall have expiated the stains with which he was infected." Next, St. Ambrose, (Serm. xx. in Psal. cxviii. T. 1, p. 1238)—"Take care that you carry not with you to the judgment seat of God, wood nor stubble which the fire may consume. Take care, lest, having one or two things that may be approved, you at the same time, have much that may give offence." "If any man's works burn, he shall suffer loss; but himself shall be saved, yet so as by fire, (1 Cor. iii. 15)." "He will be saved," the Apostle said, because "his substance shall remain, while his bad doctrine shall perish." Therefore he said, yet so as by fire, in order that his salvation be not understood to be without pain. He shows, that he shall be saved indeed, but that he shall undergo the pain of fire, and be thus purified, not like the unbelieving and wicked man who shall be punished in everlasting fire. (Com. 1. Cor. T. 2. in App. page 122)." St. Jerome, (Adv. Jov. Lib. ii. tom. iv. par. ii. page 215.)says: "If he, whose work has burned and suffered loss (as the Apostle says) shall lose the reward of his labour, yet shall he be saved by the trial of fire, so he whose works shall abide which he built upon, shall be saved without fire. Thus there will be some difference in the degrees of salvation." In his comment on Isai. Cap. lxv. T. ii. page 492, he lays down this doctrine with equal perspicuity. "As we believe the torments of the devil, and of those wicked men, who said in their hearts there is no God, to be eternal; so in regard to those sinners who have not denied their faith, and whose works will be proved and purged by fire, we conclude, that the sentence of the judge will be tempered with mercy." My next witness, St. Augustine, (in Enarr. Psal, xxxvii, T. iv. page 295) bears unequivocal testimony regarding this *dogma* of Catholic faith in the fourth and fifth centuries. He says, "Cleanse me so in this life, that I may not stand in need of that purifying fire, designed for those who shall be saved, yet so as by fire. And why, but because (as the Apostle says) they have built upon the foundation wood, hay, and stubble? If they had built gold and silver and precious stones, they would be secured from both fires, not only from that in which the wicked shall be punished for ever, but likewise from that fire which shall purify those who shall be saved, yet so as by fire." The identity of sentiment, so observable in these passages, is a striking illustration of the uniformity of opinion held by the Catholic Church in the fourth century, respecting this point of doctrine. Their testimony shows, that it was then the belief, as it is now, that some souls were purified after death "before they were allowed to approach the Divinity," so that their notion of Purgatory is one and the same with that of the Catholic Church of the present day, neither of which bear any analogy to the overcharged picture of Purgatory which you give from "a Constant Reader," in page 58, vol. ii. No. 17, CATHOLIC LAYMAN; the tinting of which you set off by some florid touches of your own. The Church, at this time, prayed for the dead too, but not after the manner of the Church of England, as I shall presently show. At some future time I shall meet you on what you call the unscriptural character of the doctrine of Purgatory; but, at present, I am examining, on that point, witnesses of the fourth century; and it is most gratifying to perceive what a uniformity of opinion pervades their evidence, with respect to this doctrine, as believed and taught by the Church at that time; and thus by the seal of their corroborating testimony, they stamp on it the impress of the doctrine of Jesus Christ. I can find in these Fathers no conflicting evidence, no diversity of opinion regarding Purgatory; no speaking of it "as a thing that might or might not be;" but, on the contrary, the clearest and fullest direct evidence in its favour. This you give as mere assertion, and by your own rule goes for nothing.

That it may the more easily appear how closely the opinion of Origen on the doctrine of Purgatory agrees with that expressed in the above cited passages, I shall here subjoin his words—"But when we arrive at that place, he that brings many good works and little that is evil, this evil the fire shall purify as it does lead, that the whole may become pure gold. He that takes with him more of lead suffers the more, that he may be refined, and what little of gold there is after the purification remains. But should the whole mass be lead, that man must experience what is written.—"*The sea covered them; they sank as lead in the mighty waters.*"—(Hom, vi. in Exod. T. ii. p. 148.)

Again—"For, if on the foundation of Christ, you have built not only gold, and silver, and precious stones, but also wood, and hay, and stubble, what do you expect when the soul shall be separated from the body? Would you enter into heaven with your wood, and hay, and stubble, to defile the kingdom of God; or, on account of those incumbrances, remain without, and receive no reward for your gold, and silver, and precious stones? Neither is just. It remains, then, that you be committed to the fire, which shall consume the light materials; for our God, to those who can comprehend heavenly things, is a consuming fire. But this fire consumes not the creature, but what the creature has himself built, wood, hay, and stubble. It is manifest, that in the first place, the fire destroys the wood of our transgressions, and returns to us the reward of our good works."—Hom. xvi. in Jerom. T. iii. page 231.

Those fathers of the fourth century, whose opinions I have given, either declare the established doctrine of the Church at that period, or they wrote what was untrue, or heretical. If they have given us the doctrine of the Church in their time, such doctrine must necessarily be true, unless you succeed in showing the Church heretical at that time. If they published that which was not the doctrine of the Church at that time, and wrote only to puzzle posterity, why were not these false principles *then*, or in the next age, condemned by the Church? To this proposition, I demand a direct reply; and the same I repeat with regard to the citations from Origen, against whom you have not yet given anything more convincing than *mere assertion*, or individual opinion, neither of which can be admitted as proof. You conclude, rather hastily, that the question of Purgatory, with respect to the first three hundred years of the Church, "may now be considered as settled;" this, too, is assertion, and will require to be formally proved. Origen still stands forth with the same undiminished assurance of credibility, as when I first put him forward; in the sporting phrase, I say, "You have not yet taken a feather out of him," and now he must stand or fall with those other Fathers in whose company I have placed him; yet, should I give him up as being *heretical*, it would be no difficult matter, independently of him, to prove that the Church, in the second and third century, held the doctrine of Purgatory; this I will prove when you show by proper authority, the Catholic Church, that my citations from Origen are heretical, and have been condemned.

The Catholic Church of the fourth century prayed for the *saints*, and for the others who died in the Christian faith in quite a different manner.—(Epiph. Hœr. 75, sec 7, t. i., p. 911.) (St. Aug. Ench. cap. 109.) For the latter they prayed that God would grant them pardon of their sins, that he would have mercy on them; and for the former, their prayers were *thanksgivings.—(Ibid.)* "There is a way of living so good that it does not need these helps of prayers and oblations after death.—(St. Augustin Ench. cap. 109, 110.) They who need not these helps after death, namely, the saints, who bring with them, out of this world, only *gold*, and *silver*, and *precious stones*, are, at once, admitted to glory. Of them it is said (Apoc. iii. 21)—"will I grant to sit with me on my throne;" and (Apoc. ii. 26)—"I will give him power over the nations, and he shall rule them with a rod of iron." To these saints, who are already come into the kingdom of God, the supplicatory import of "thy kingdom come" is inapplicable; neither have you given any proof of the contrary. I hold, with St. Cyprian, as I have already stated, that "they pray anxiously to God for our salvation," and by their intercession for man, they exercise that power so distinctly expressed by a rod of iron. They offer up the prayers of the saints on earth to God (Apoc. v. 8.) (St. Cyril, Catech. Myst. v., n. ix. x., page 328) declares that—"The souls of the dead are relieved and comforted by the sacrifice of the altar and by prayer." If space permitted, I could supply many other quotations, equally positive, in favour of this doctrine, all proving the efficacy of prayers, &c., for the dead, and the remission of some sins in a future world; so that it is evident that these prayers, in the fourth century, did go beyond the Protestant notion of prayers for the dead; and if the Catholics have, as you say, grossly violated the ancient practice of prayers for the dead, it is truly consoling to find we are partners in that violation with these holy men named in this paper. In the next place, to my demand of a Scripture proof for holidays in honour of the saints, &c., you reply that, "Scripture proof is required only for articles of faith," and not for "rites and ceremonies," and thence you infer the Church has power to appoint holidays. Are we to understand that "rites and ceremonies" are holidays and prayers? This is precisely your argument.

If Heb. xiii. 7, be with you direct authority to commemorate the Apostles, you must admit, on the same direct

authority, that these Apostles still have rule over you; but it could be easily proved that this text is not authority for either the one or the other; so you have yet to give Scripture proof of your prayers for the dead, and for holidays in honour of the saints.

I am, Sir, yours, &c., &c.,

EDMOND POWER.

The arrival of a long letter from Mr. Power has placed us in a disagreeable perplexity, between our desire to deal courteously with our correspondent and our fear of wearying the patience of our readers with further discussion on an exhausted subject. As the best mode of reconciling our duty to both, we print Mr. Power's letter in full, and at the same time, for the convenience of our readers, we portion off those parts of the subjects which have been thoroughly discussed from those which still deserve examination.

We repeat, then, that as far as the Fathers of the first three centuries are concerned, the question is settled—settled, that is, as far as any controversy can be—when both parties are agreed as to the state of the facts, and when nothing remains but a difference of opinion.

The question proposed was—"Do any writers for the first three centuries make any mention of the doctrine of Purgatory?" and it now appears that, during the many months our columns have been open for the discussion of this question, evidence has only been able to be adduced from *one* of the many writers who flourished during the first three hundred years of our religion, and that one Origen! And we are also agreed as to the fact that Origen is in general a very unsafe guide, and that he has fallen into many heresies.

We *differ* in opinion, in that Mr. Power holds, that in the passages cited Origen expresses views exactly coinciding with the present Roman Catholic doctrine of Purgatory, and that he was also joined in these opinions by the Church of his day; while we hold that in these passages Origen only expressed a certain heretical notion of his own, in which he was neither followed by the Church of his own day nor the Church of Rome at present.

It would be hopeless to expect that this difference of opinion could be removed by further argument; and we only appeal from Mr. Power's opinion (who, under the exigencies of controversy, is scarcely an impartial judge) to that of the most learned and candid divines of his own communion, who, we have shown, agree with us, and not with him. We think that our readers will be grateful to us for closing all further discussion on this part of the subject, except such as may be calculated to throw some new light on the state of the facts, such as other passages from the Fathers of the first three centuries, which Mr. Power professes to be able to produce, and which, of course, he ought to do, and is perfectly free to do if he can.

It would seem, then, that we ought to come next to discuss the state of the facts as to the writers of the fourth century, by whose help Mr. Power proposes to interpret Origen; but there is something which must take precedence of a question of facts, and that is a question of fundamental principles. Now, in a part of his letter, to which he has invited our especial attention, Mr. Power makes it plain that the principles on which he argues the question are wholly different from ours. He says, "Those Fathers of the fourth century whose opinions I have given, either declare the established doctrine of the Church of that period, or they wrote what was untrue.* If they have given us the doctrine of the Church in their time, such doctrine must necessarily be true. If they published that which was not the doctrine of the Church at that time, why were not these false principles then, or in the next age, condemned by the Church? To this proposition I demand a direct reply."

Now, it is evident that our reply to this question must come before any discussion as to the views of particular writers of the fourth century. For suppose that we were completely successful in demolishing every passage which could be brought forward in proof of Purgatory from writers of the fourth century, Mr. Power would only have to alter the word "fourth," in the argument just cited, into "fifth," or "sixth," or "seventh," or whatever the first century may be in which he can find purgatory to have been part of the received belief among Christians. In fact, it is plain that the way Mr. Power, perhaps unconsciously, argues is—"Purgatory is part of the teaching of the Church now; the Church cannot err, and her doctrines must be always the same; therefore the statements of the Fathers of the fourth century must be interpreted so as to coincide with the teaching of the Church now, and the statements of Origen, so as to coincide with those of the Fathers of the fourth century."

Now, when Mr. Power says—"Either these Fathers declare the established doctrine of the Church of that period, or they wrote what was untrue."† We object to his statement for two reasons; first, he assumes that the established doctrine of the Church is always the same, which is denied, not only by Protestants, but also by Mr. Newman, and the other Roman Catholics who hold the doctrine of development; and, secondly, he assumes that the received belief of the majority of Christians is in every point true, which is denied by Protestants. Now, no one is at liberty to assume, in controversy, first principles denied by his opponent, otherwise the controversy falls to the ground at once. If Mr. Power were at liberty to assume that the Church of Rome is infallible, then it would be needless for him to spend his time in collecting the opinion of the Fathers about Purgatory; he might content himself with saying it is the doctrine of the Church now—that is enough. On the other hand, if we were at liberty to assume the principle of the sufficiency of Scripture, we need not appeal to the Fathers; we might say there is nothing about Purgatory in the Bible—that is enough. But there is a neutral ground on which we can meet Mr. Power, and that is, to treat the matter as a purely historical question. Without assuming the doctrinal point that the writers of the first three centuries must have believed exactly as those of the tenth century, can you ascertain from their own writings whether they believed in Purgatory or not? Can you connect, by historical evidence, Purgatory with the teaching of the Apostles, and can you show that those who learned from them held that doctrine? We have ascertained, in the course of this discussion, that if they believed in Purgatory, at least in all their writings, they said nothing about it; and *that* though there were many occasions when we might expect them to have mentioned it. There is a great gap, then, between the Apostolic teaching and the first mention of Purgatory—a gap which nothing but the doctrine of the infallibility of the Church can ever bridge over.

Having laid down these principles, we have a clear way to enter next month on the examination of the views of subsequent writers, it being understood that no testimony from the fourth century can make up for the want of earlier evidence—that we are not at liberty to assume it to be impossible that Gregory of Nyssa, or Basil ever could have fallen into error on any point; and that if Mr. Power can even succeed in proving that the Fathers of the fourth century believed exactly the same as Origen, we are free to reply, "so much the worse for the Fathers of the fourth century."

The same principles enable us to dispose of the challenge which Mr. Power repeats as to Origen, whom he says we have left untouched. Mr. Power's mistake is, that he imagines the *onus probandi* to be on us to show that the passages cited from Origen have been formally condemned; whereas, in truth, it is incumbent on him to show that the sentiments there expressed are those of the church of the time, before he can prove that Purgatory was the belief of the third century. The principle assumed by Mr. Power is, that every sentence in Origen must be understood to be in accordance with the doctrine of the Church, unless it can be showed that that particular sentence has been formally condemned. It would be untrue to assume this in the case of any one of the fathers, but it is perfectly monstrous to assume it of Origen.* Does Mr. Power imagine that there was a "Congregation of the Index" in those days, who went over the works of every eminent Christian writer, expurgating all the faulty passages, and leaving nothing but what might be safely followed by posterity? One would fancy that he must entertain some such belief, from his so often asking us either to receive the doctrine held by such and such a father, or else to show where this sentence was condemned by his successors. At all events, concerning Origen, the hero of a hundred heresies, it is enough to say that, with regard to any exposition taken at random from his works, the odds are that it is *not* in accordance with the general opinion of the church; and any one who asserts the contrary is bound to prove it.

We must not conclude without some remarks on the other subject which Mr. Power has introduced into this discussion—the necessity for a Scripture proof for church holidays, &c.; because it is an example how ignorant even educated Roman Catholics are as to the first principles of Protestants—ignorance which we hope this journal has already done some good in removing.

Protestants hold, then, that our Lord by his own mouth, and those of his apostles, revealed to the world certain truths which it deeply concerned mankind to know; and that in order that this revelation should not be lost, it was committed to writing in what are commonly known as the "Holy Scriptures." For any thing which claims to be part of this system of truth, the knowledge of which is necessary to men's salvation, they accordingly require Scripture proof.

But they hold, likewise, that our Lord formed his disciples into a society, having full powers to make regulations for its preservation and for the details of its worship, &c.; and for details of this nature they do *not* require Scriptural proof.

If any one asks us why do we religiously observe the festival of Christmas Day, or why do we make use in our public worship of such and such a prayer? then we answer, on the authority of our Church, and we never think of seeking for any other reply; but if any one were to assert it to be *necessary to salvation* to observe the festival of Christmas Day, or to say that the church could not do otherwise than command its observance, then, for such an assertion as this, we should ask for Scriptural proof, as well as for historical proof, that the church always did observe the festival in question.

We may add, that the distinction here insisted on, though sometimes lost sight of by Roman Catholic controversialists, is recognized by their best writers who always distinguish between Divine and ecclesiastical traditions.

WHAT IS THE POSITION OF THE PRIEST IN THE MASS?

TO THE EDITOR OF THE CATHOLIC LAYMAN.

SIR—I have observed in your journal many remarks, at both sides, of considerable ability, on the Roman Catholic doctrine of Transubstantiation, and the Sacrifice of the Mass. Such vital topics demand the most careful discussion. Both parties should distinctly comprehend the propositions for or against which they contend. Many of them have been clearly stated, and ably defended by your Roman Catholic correspondents. I am in hopes, therefore, they will explain to me their views on one of the most momentous nature, and as yet untouched by either. We know enough of the disputed change in the eucharistic elements; we know that the same propitiatory sacrifice is said to be there offered up that took place on the Cross of Calvary; but we do not yet know what exact position the *priest* who accomplishes these sacred mysteries is supposed to occupy. If that which I am about to state be really the doctrine of their church, it will be an additional obstacle to adopting their belief. If, on the other hand, it be shown not to be so, it will be a serious obstacle removed. It is, therefore, well worth their while to grapple with the subject.

The short question is this—is the priest, in the administration of this sacrament, supposed to take on himself the "person, power, and functions" of our Lord Jesus Christ? If he be so, we must require strong proof of so startling a proposition—blasphemous if falsely put forward—and if he be not, I must ask for an explanation of the following passages in the Catechism of the Council of Trent:—

"* The Sacrifice of the Mass is one and the same sacrifice with that of the Cross; the victim is still one and the same, Jesus Christ. * * * * *The priest is also the same* Christ our Lord; the ministers who offer this sacrifice consecrate the holy mysteries *not in their own*, BUT IN THE PERSON OF CHRIST. This, the words of consecration declare; the priest does not say—'This is the body of Christ,' but, this is MY body;' and thus invested with the character of Christ, he changes the substance of the bread and wine into the substance of his real body and blood."

But this may be a solitary expression, not meant to convey so strong a meaning as at first sight it bears. Yet it is strange that a few pages afterwards,† in speaking of the power of the priest in the Sacrament of Penance, it says—"The voice of the priest, who is legitimately constituted a minister for the remission of sins, is to be heard as that of Christ *himself*, who said to the lame man—'Son, be of good cheer, thy sins are forgiven thee.'"

Lest we should give this or the preceding passage a figurative turn, we meet, a few pages further on, language that seems scarcely capable of being equivocal—"In the minister of God, who sits in the tribunal of penance as his legitimate judge, he (the penitent) venerates the *power and* PERSON of our Lord Jesus Christ; for, in the administration of this, *as in that of the other sacraments*, the priest represents the character, and discharges the functions of Jesus Christ."

I ask your correspondents to consider these three passages together, and say what power is attributed to the priest, or what is wanting to his actual deification—I mean, during, and with reference to, his celebration of these sacraments. I shall reserve my remarks—if remarks be needed on such a result—till I find whether or not the plain interpretation be that of the Roman Catholic belief. If it be, I should like to see some attempt at supporting its truth; if it be not, I should remind them that the doctrine of Transubstantiation has affected to be founded on a *literal* interpretation of some texts of Scripture. In a former letter I think I have shown that this supposition is utterly mistaken. In a future I may have to observe that their official explanations of this Sacrament cannot be credited by good Roman Catholics, unless when softened and diluted by a very *figurative* interpretation.

FONTIUM PETITOR.

THE BLESSED VIRGIN AND THE HOLY GHOST.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE CATHOLIC LAYMAN.

SIR—I fear that Pat's report of the sermon in which the shocking statement was made, that the Blessed Virgin was the wife of the Holy Ghost, must have been but too true, for we find the same sort of thing affirmed, not only in Dr.

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* For clearness we omit in this argument the word heretical, added here by Mr. Power, the word being ambiguous. The word heresy is sometimes used to denote any grave doctrinal error; sometimes such an error as was condemned by the majority of Christians at the time when it originated. It is plain that it would be a contradiction in terms to speak of the majority of Christians as falling into heresy in the latter sense, though not in the former; and thus the word may be so used as to prejudge the great question at issue between Roman Catholics and Protestants—viz., was it possible for the majority of Christians at any time to fall into serious error on religious subjects.

† This phrase "established doctrine of the Church," being also ambiguous, it is necessary to remark that it is not pretended that the Church had established anything in the first thousand years by *any formal decision* upon Purgatory; and the question only is whether it was the *received belief of the majority of Christians.*

* The passages from Origen, which Mr. Power quotes, have been already the subject of much discussion. Not to occupy space unnecessarily, we think it enough to refer the reader to Vol. i., p. 67, 142, and Vol. ii., p. 67.

* Translated by the Rev. J. Donovan, Professor of the Royal College of Maynooth. Coyne, Dublin, 1829; p. 249.

† Page 256.